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FOR ACTION

COUNTRY PROGRAMME RECOMMENDATION**

Venezuela

Addendum

SUMMARY

The present addendum to the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session in January 1997 contains the final country programme recommendation for Board approval.

It contains a recommendation for funding the country programme of Venezuela which has an annual planning level of $1,000,000 or less. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve the amount of $4,250,000 from general resources, subject to the availability of funds, and $2,625,000 in supplementary funds, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 1998 to 2002.

* E/ICEF/1997/20.

** The original country note provided only indicative figures for estimated programme cooperation. The figures provided in the present addendum are final and take into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 1996. They will be contained in the "Summary of 1997 recommendations for general resources and supplementary funding programmes" (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.18).

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BASIC DATA
(1995 unless otherwise stated)

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	9.3
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	24
IMR (per 1,000 live births)	20
Underweight (% moderate and severe, 1987)	6
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births, 1990)	120
Literacy (% male/female)	92/90
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female)	81/84
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%, 1992)	78
Access to safe water (%)	79
Access to health services (%)	...
GNP per capita	$3,020
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
tuberculosis:	91 per cent
diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus:	68 per cent
measles:	67 per cent
poliomyelitis:	85 per cent
Pregnant women immunized against:	
tetanus:	18 per cent

THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

1. Venezuela currently allocates some 32 per cent of its national budget to investment in the social sector, one of the highest allocations to the sector in Latin America and the Caribbean. In early 1996, the Government began to implement a new series of macroeconomic policies, called the "Venezuela Agenda". The social section of the agenda contains 14 compensatory programmes financed by a minimum allocation of 2 per cent of the gross domestic product. Approximately half of the resources are designated for children under 15 years of age through the educational and health systems.

2. This effort addresses a severe situation of poverty and increased income and regional disparities, which adversely affects the capacity of the country to reach many of the decade goals for children. The country's resources have not been employed sufficiently to build up a solid and sustainable infrastructure, or to build a culture of participation in public policies and financing. This leaves Venezuela as one of the countries in the region which has a legacy of dependency on the State. Public sector institutions exercise rigid controls, the legal framework restricts competitiveness and structures are centralized, all of which hamper the quality and coverage of services. A large percentage of children, adolescents, women and indigenous people, especially in marginal areas, continue to lack access to social services. Reforms in the management of public policy in favour of children are needed to address these problems and to sustain progress made to date.

3. In addition, other problems affecting children's rights are emerging. Violence in the family, community and in society requires greater attention. Children with legal problems are often deprived of their freedom without trial and a significant but unknown number lack an identity being that they are children of illegal immigrants, despite the fact that they are born on Venezuelan soil and are granted the right to nationality by the Constitution.

PROGRAMME COOPERATION, 1996-1997

4. In 1995, the Executive Board approved a two-year bridging programme for 1996-1997, the general objectives of which were to promote compliance of national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Eliminational of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and to contribute to the development of institutional capacity for achieving the goals for children, particularly in matters of health and basic education, stressing geographical areas with the greatest inequalities. Encouraged by UNICEF advocacy, in 1995 the Government started a participatory process to adapt its laws to the Conventions.

5. The programme supported the design and implementation of a strategy to fight diarrhoea in Zulia state, where local leaders and volunteers have become organized around the problem of dehydration. Through a social communication campaign led by indigenous women and activities focusing on solutions to environmental pollution problems, identified as causes of morbidity and mortality, it was possible to address other problems affecting child development, including sanitation, nutrition, breast-feeding and nurturing patterns.

6. The programme for the renewal of basic rural education promoted by UNICEF was so successful that during the academic year 1996-1997, it was converted into a national rural education policy and received funding from the Ministry of Education. With the support of the subregional Amazon programme (approved by the Executive Board in 1996 for the period 1997-2001 (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.70)), bilingual intercultural education has been strengthened. The topic of children's rights has begun to be incorporated into the school curriculum.

7. With support from the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean, UNICEF helped to identify weaknesses in the field of statistical information about children and provided seed capital for the expansion of the Comprehensive Social Information System. Support is now being provided by other United Nations agencies, state governments and universities. This inter-institutional and inter-agency effort avoids duplication and increases coordination and the rational use of resources.

8. A UNICEF-initiated analysis of social investment and its effects on children led the Government to evaluate and reform the effectiveness of strategies of poverty alleviation programmes and their effects on mothers and children. Currently, local pilot experiences within a rights programming framework are being incorporated into national education and health policies.

Lessons learned

9. Although both the Government and civil society recognize that investing in children is a priority, the challenge is how to make more efficient and effective use of the resources allocated to the survival, development and protection of children and adolescents.

10. At a joint review of the situation of children that involved the Government, UNICEF and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), it was concluded that unless the interests and rights of children are integrated into macro-level reforms, sustainable progress will be difficult to achieve, even in such programmes as immunization. The review also concluded that it is necessary to: (a) improve links between public policy and the special government funds allocated to offset the social effects of economic adjustment; (b) strengthen technical, administrative and monitoring and evaluation capacities; (c) decentralize planning; (d) reduce the frequency of changes in government counterparts; and (e) expand information systems to guide decision-making at national and local levels.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMME COOPERATION, 1998-2002

Estimated annual expenditure a/
(In thousands of United States dollars)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
General resources						
Public policy, children and gender equity	400	350	350	400	350	1 850
Local development	200	250	250	150	150	1 000
Social mobilization and communication	250	250	250	300	350	1 400
Subtotal	850	850	850	850	850	4 250
Supplementary funding						
Public policy, children and gender equity	75	75	100	100	100	450
Local development	25	160	175	225	275	860
Social mobilization and communication	160	225	300	300	330	1 315
Subtotal	260	460	575	625	705	2 625
Total	1 110	1 310	1 425	1 475	1 555	6 875

a/ In addition, supplementary funding in the amount of $1.25 million has been approved for Venezuela as part of the subregional programme for the Andean region (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.24), and in the amount of $1.125 million as part of the Amazon subregional programme (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.70).

Objectives and strategy

11. The primary objective of the country programme is to create greater awareness throughout society of the situation of children and to foster increased involvement in seeking solutions in order to ensure a climate for the full exercise of citizenship by all children. In order to do so, the programme will support the Government in making more efficient use of social sector investments to achieve equity and reduce disparities; promote the use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to adapt national legislation and provide assistance to a framework for policy-making; and in selected marginalized areas, support targeted local-level planning and implementation of services in the context of the national decentralization process with a view to improving the situation of the most vulnerable children.

12. The programme's strategy will build on the experience of the previous country programme and focus on advocacy and the development of databases and networks for acquiring and disseminating information related to the situation of children and women in order to support policy formulation and budgetary allocations. At community and family levels in the targeted areas, these strategies will be complemented by capacity-building and by selective but strategic service delivery in early childhood development, community care, recreation and participation of youth in local development and basic education, and will be an integral part of the Andean and Amazon subregional programmes, building on a collective range of experiences among participating countries.

Public policy, children and gender equity

13. The programme will support: (a) the adaptation of the national legal framework to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (b) ongoing assessment of the situation of children and women, followed by the analysis and widespread dissemination of the information gathered, and the development of public policies to ensure children's and women's rights; and (c) the strengthening of comprehensive decentralized information systems.

14. Activities will include the provision of technical assistance to key central ministries involved in policy reform; the development of training programmes for counterparts on the implications of children's rights for public policy; and support to the development of indicators to evaluate the impact of these policies. Key allies and counterparts will be leading universities, research centres and training institutions.

Local development

15. The programme, which will focus on some slum areas in the Caracas metropolitan area and Zulia and Amazonas states, will aim to empower families through access to information and training about improved child-care practices; provide management training for community-based programmes in health, nutrition, education and community development; promote exchanges of experience; and demonstrate the effectiveness of intersectoral projects that work to overcome marginalization and lack of access to services and citizenship rights due to poverty. The results of these experiences will serve as feedback for national public policy and for promoting social mobilization.

16. Key activities aimed at strengthening local management will include training of municipalities and departments on planning, managing and evaluating the implementation of local development plans from a perspective of child rights and gender equity, with subsequent progress reviews and adjustments. The programme will promote community participation through the design of a local mobilization strategy and its application in the municipalities covered by the programme. The programme will support limited provision of services and focus primarily on technical assistance to help formulate local development plans that favour children. The programme will develop partnerships with local governments and development organizations, leaders of civic and religious organization and local universities.

Social mobilization and communication

17. This programme is aimed at analyzing and disseminating information and knowledge so that key counterparts in government and civil society can define priorities and guide actions to ensure both compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and effective service delivery and use of resources to benefit children and women. UNICEF will support country forums for joint collaboration between the public and private sectors to enhance resource mobilization for social development programmes, and ensure that children's issues remain a priority on the national agenda through continued use of opinion polls and other methods.

18. The programme will promote a communication strategy that will inform decision makers of the situation of children and programme progress in the country. The strategy will involve mass media and other direct channels, including NGOs and government agencies. The strategy will be guided by and monitored through knowledge, attitude and practice surveys. Important alliances will be universities, the mass media and leaders of civil society, including the Catholic Church, the private sector and NGOs.

Monitoring and evaluation

19. The implementation and monitoring of the country programme will be coordinated through a committee headed by the Coordination and Planning Office of the Presidency of the Republic and will include representatives of all major government and civil society partners, as well as UNICEF and other agencies. Similar committees will be established in the states or municipalities where local development plans are being implemented.

20. A set of quantitative indicators and expected results has been identified for each programme. Evaluations will be carried out on a participatory basis and the results shared with partners and throughout civil society. In late 1998, an assessment will be carried out in order to provide inputs to the new Government that is to take office in 1999.

21. The national-level committee will oversee annual programme reviews and the mid-term review, which will be undertaken in the year 2000. In accordance with the Executive Board's recent decision on the criteria for the allocation of general resources (E/ICEF/1997/12 (Part III), decision 1997/12), at this time UNICEF and the Government will initiate discussions about the future nature of UNICEF cooperation in Venezuela.

Coordination with other United Nations agencies

22. Collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme will focus on the development of public policies and information systems. UNICEF will also work with the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization in health sector reforms, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in educational sector reforms and the International Labour Organisation in the adjustment of legislation and adoption of child labour policies. UNICEF will also work with the World Bank on issues related to urban development programmes and with the Inter-American Development Bank through continued co-financing of projects.

Programme management

23. The office structure will reflect and support the framework of the country programme, with more focus on child rights policy expertise, especially in the areas of legal reform, communication and information management. The office remains very small and focused on its capacity to interest partners, create alliances and mobilize resources to achieve programme objectives. This will replace the previous focus on programme planning and health.

Fund-raising

24. Supplementary funds for the new country programme will be limited. However, UNICEF has been developing relationships with the national private sector so as to increase supplementary funding from domestic sources.

TABLE

LINKAGE OF PROGRAMME BUDGET AND STAFFING/STAFF COSTS

COUNTRY : VENEZUELA
PROGRAMME : 1998-2002

PROGRAMME SECTION/AREAS AND FUNDING SOURCE	PROGRAMME BUDGET				POSTS a/										STAFF COSTS b/		
	GR	FSF	NSF	TOTAL	D2/L7	D1/L6	P/L5	P/L4	P/L3	P/L2	IP	NP	GS	TOTAL	IP	LOCAL	TOTAL
GENERAL RESOURCES :																	
PUBLIC POLICY, CHILDREN AND GENDER	1,850,000			1,850,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	0	832,969	832,969
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT	1,000,000			1,000,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3	0	0.3	0	204,539	204,539
SOCIAL MOBILIZATION&COMMUNICATION	1,400,000			1,400,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	84,822	84,822
TOTAL GR	4,250,000			4,250,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.3	3	5.3	0	1,122,330	1,122,330
SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING :																	
PUBLIC POLICY, CHILDREN AND GENDER		0	450,000	450,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT		0	860,000	860,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.7	0	0.7	0	108,464	108,464
SOCIAL MOBILIZATION&COMMUNICATION		0	1,315,000	1,315,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SF		0	2,625,000	2,625,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.7	0	0.7	0	108,464	108,464
TOTAL GR & SF	4,250,000	0	2,625,000	6,875,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	6	0	1,230,794	1,230,794
SUPPORT BUDGET		Operating costs		832,012													
		Staffing			0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	3	5	624,639	628,789	1,253,428
GRAND TOTAL (GR + SF + SB)					0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	6	11	624,639	1,859,583	2,484,222
	Number of posts and staff costs:																
	Current programme cycle										1	4	7	12			
	At the end of proposed programme cycle (indicative only)										1	4	6	11	624,639	1,859,583	2,484,222

GR = general resources.
SF = supplementary funding.
FSF = funded supplementary funding.
NSF = new supplementary funding.
IP = International Professional.
NP = national Professional.
GS = General Service.
SB = support budget.

a/ Each post, regardless of its funding source, supports the country programme as a whole.
b/ Excludes temporary assistance and overtime.